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Preventing abuse

It takes the efforts of everyone to put a stop to child abuse. See page 5 to see how you can play a role.



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Gelnhausen students celebrate their efforts to become independent readers. See page 26.



Cheering the champs

The U.S. Forces Europe best cheerleaders show off in Giessen. See page 28 for the story.



Herald Union



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Serving the military communities of the 104th Area Support Group

March 30, 2004

News flash

Kudos to top teen

Congratulations to Baumholder's Kadeja Gaines, the Installation Management Agency-Europe's 2004 Youth of the Year. The 16-year-old, straight-A student won the competition after being named both the 222nd Base Support Battalion's and 104th Area Support Group's Youth of the Year. Gaines competed against six other ASG representatives in Stuttgart for the IMA-E honors and will now advance to compete against the U.S. Forces Europe Air Force and Navy Youths of the Year.



Army Emergency Relief

This year's Army Emergency Relief fund-raising campaign kicks off April 1 and runs through May 15. "Last year AER provided more than \$34 million of direct assistance to some 50,000 Soldiers and their families," said Russell B. Hall, Installation Management Agency-Europe Region director. "This assistance was provided through interest-free loans, grants and scholarships, all of which were made possible through generous individual contributions." Soldiers wishing to contribute may do so through a monthly allotment from their pay or through a cash or check donation. For more information visit the www.aerhq.org website or stop by your local AER office. (IMA-E Public Affairs)

Dempsey earns second star

Task Force 1st Armored Division's commanding general, Brig. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, was promoted to major general in a ceremony at the division headquarters in Baghdad March 14. Dempsey, who has commanded the Task Force since July 16, 2003, was promoted by Gen. John Abizaid, commander of the U.S. Central Command. (1st AD Public Affairs)



AWAG Conference May 2-6

Register now to attend this year's American Women's Activities, Germany, Conference to be held May 2-6 at the AllgäuSternHotel in Sonthofen. The conference will focus on leadership development, host nation-American relationships, club procedures, personal and professional growth, increased organizational skills and community awareness. For more information call Catherine Locke at civ (06374) 802 989 or send an email to hessen@awag.us.

Torch Party heralds return

Families, friends welcome 1st AD Soldiers home from Iraq

Story by Sgt. Gregory F. Withrow
1st Armored Division Public Affairs Office

Open arms, hugs and kisses were the theme as friends and family members gathered to welcome home Iron Soldiers of 1st Armored Division's Torch Party after a yearlong deployment to Iraq. Family members could barely contain their excitement as they waited nervously for the small contingent of Soldiers forming the Torch Party to arrive at Wiesbaden Army Airfield March 12.

"I am so excited. I have been up since 5:30. He was trying to keep it a surprise," said Shauna Wiggins, wife of Staff Sgt. Dillon Wiggins, "but the FRG [Family Readiness Group] called me and told me to be ready."

Separation is nothing new to the Wiggins, but this time was different. "We've been together for seven years and he has been to Korea before, but the situation in this deployment is totally different. I am so glad he is home," said Wiggins.

"I am going to jump on my daddy," said 7-year-old Joseph Courchen, anticipating his father Sgt. 1st Class William Courchen's return. "We were fortunate that he got to come home during the deployment," said wife Jennifer Courchen. "We are so happy he will be home now."

As the familiar faces appeared, family members and friends clapped and cheered, running to embrace those they had so long missed.

In a rush to claim their father, Sydney and Annie Schwaiger outraced their mother Barb, smothering Maj. Steve Schwaiger

See Torch Party on page 4



Photo by Sgt. Gregory F. Withrow

Sydney Schwaiger wears her father's (Maj. Steve Schwaiger) cavalry stetson as she hugs him during his homecoming.

Address issues of concern

Leaders detail reintegration plan

By Cassandra Kardeke

221st Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Family members of Soldiers and civilians returning home from Iraq got a chance to speak to the experts during a Reintegration Town Hall held at Wiesbaden Army Airfield March 23.

Over 350 people took advantage of the special forum, hosted at the Wiesbaden Community Activity Center and broadcast via video teleconference to installations throughout the 104th Area Support Group. United States Army Europe, the Information Management Agency-Europe and 104th ASG officials were on hand to brief topics ranging from the reintegration process to child care and block leave, while BSB officials were on hand in their prospective areas throughout the meeting.

"We've processed approximately 9,000 soldiers back into the community so far. We believe in this plan," said Brig. Gen. Russell Frutiger, USAREUR deputy chief of staff, G1, after

See Reintegration plan on page 4



Photo by Cassandra Kardeke

Kathy Cutwork, a Family Readiness Group representative for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Division, gets more information about reintegration from Col. Jon Finke of the 1st Personnel Command.

Commentary

Second thoughts

OIF progress report — one year later

On March 19, 2003, coalition forces launched Operation Iraqi Freedom. While newspapers are full of the latest U.S. casualty figures and stories about Americans who have been hurt during Operation Iraqi Freedom, recognition of the progress made in Iraq often escapes public attention. Following are a few benchmarks:

- On March 8 the Iraqi Governing Council approved the Transitional Administrative Law. The TAL will serve as Iraq's interim constitution between June 30, 2004, and Dec. 31, 2005. An interim government will assume sovereignty on June 30. Elections for a national assembly will be held in December, paving the way for a transitional government until a permanent constitution is written and ratified by referendum in the fall of 2005. The TAL includes a Bill of Rights that is unprecedented for Iraq and the region.

- More than 170 independent newspapers are in print. Al Iraqia (formerly the Iraqi Media Network) is broadcasting 20 hours per day.

- More than 200,000 Iraqis now provide security for their fellow citizens. This includes 77,000 police officers, more than 30,000 Iraqi Civil Defense Corps members, 20,000 Iraqi Border Police Force members, 73,000 Facility Protection Service members and 3,000 Iraqi soldiers.

- Security in Iraq is improving and attacks against Coalition elements continue on a downward trend.

- Saddam Hussein's ties to terror have been shattered, and 46 of the 55 most wanted regime members have been captured or killed.

- Food and electricity are now distributed more equally across the country. And the international community has pledged at least \$32 billion to improve schools, health care, roads, water, agriculture and electricity.

- Electricity levels exceeded pre-war capacity in early fall 2003.

- Schools and clinics have been renovated and reopened; power plants, hospitals, water and sanitation facilities, bridges and roads are being rehabilitated.

- Iraq's oil infrastructure is being rebuilt, with the Iraqi industry already producing 2.5 million barrels of oil per day.

- The Saddam Hussein regime spent \$16 million in 2002 on health care, less than one dollar per Iraqi per year. Today the 2004 budget for the Ministry of Health has been dramatically increased to \$950 million.

- More and more Iraqi children are attending ever-improving schools where they are now free to learn new ideas. Attendance in the 2003-2004 school year is as high as or higher than pre-conflict levels. Over eight million textbooks have been distributed around the country.

- Iraqis now have access to an ever-growing number of independent sources of news, including newspapers, radio stations and satellite television networks.

- Small businesses are thriving in the streets of Iraq — creating new jobs for Iraqis.

- Iraq has a stable currency — the value of the new Iraqi dinar has already risen 25 percent. (Courtesy of the Defense Department's Strategic Communications Division)

Letters to the editor

Thanks for story about my son

My name is Maureen Reardon and I am the mother of Staff Sgt Shane Floyd and a very proud mother at that. Thank you for the lovely story and picture [March 16 issue — Fire destroys Butzbach apartment]. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for finding this story worthy enough to write and recognize my son and his heroic deed. In today's world in the large scheme of things the little heroes are sometimes overlooked. I do not know if you are aware of the fact my son Staff Sgt Floyd is being discharged from the U.S. Army and is coming home. About two weeks before this fire occurred Shane called to tell me all his "discharge process paperwork" was put on hold due to a military technicality. He was very disappointed, but as I've always told him and his brothers there is a reason for all that happens in life. I told Shane "God meant this to be; he's not ready for you to leave Germany yet. There is something he needs you to do yet." I smile now because Shane's answer was, "Well, why doesn't he tell me so I can get it done and come home." The day after the fire, Shane called to tell me what he had done. I was so proud and said, "See, I told you God still needed you there." Shane of course tried to disregard my statement and I told him, "Wait just a minute — who did this lady call in the middle of the night for help? You, not the guy next door. You were there and did what had to be done." I continued the conversation by saying, "and I will bet you \$10 you will have the discharge paperwork in hand and come home before the end of the month." Shane left Germany March 24.

Maureen Reardon
Ocala, Fla.

Upset with boxing coverage

I read your article in the *Herald Union*, and was a bit upset. In the first bout, Kevin Hawkins from the 284th Base Support Battalion was not knocked down. He tripped over unevenly spread canvas. You failed to interview him, and ask him how long he has been boxing. He has only been doing this for approximately two months. When interviewing Klakowics from the Hanau team, he mentioned that this was his first "official" fight. It is obvious this guy has been in the ring before. Then, you added that Hawkins kept coming back for more punishment. Some people would call that commitment and determination. The way you wrote this article sounds as if Hawkins should get no credit for getting in the ring for the first time. I feel that you should commend all of the guys for showing the courage to get in the ring in front of all those people. We are all on the same team at the end of the night. Also, the large picture showing the match between Castillo (his name was spelled incorrectly in the program) and Carpenter is not accurate.

Tamara D Cannon
284th Base Support Battalion Provost Marshal's Office,
IACS Super-Registrar

Editor's response: I thought boxing fans were treated to a great night of boxing action at the Dexheim tournament and meant in no way to demean the "commitment or determination" of any of the fighters. Indeed Hawkins did



Photo by Karl Weisel

Gabriel Castillo (left) and Daniel Carpenter battle for bragging rights at Dexheim's Open and Novice Tournament.

show a lot spirit in "coming back for more punishment" before the fight was stopped by the referee. Also thank you for correcting the photo caption. My mistake — the photo actually shows the 123rd Main Support Battalion's Ian Clough trading shots with Rooney Cruz Jr. from 1st Battalion, 37th Armor. See the accompanying photo for the gentlemen in question — Gabriel Castillo (left) and Daniel Carpenter.

Thanks for boxing coverage

I wanted you to know that I appreciated the coverage you provided of the recent boxing tournaments. As a new fighter just getting started in this it was nice to see someone with an interest in the sport and a voice with which to share it with the community. Thank you.

Sgt. Kevin L. Hawkins
Military Police

Ashamed of protesters

I was very sad to see on television that Germans held a demonstration against the United States and the Iraq war in Landstuhl and later in Ramstein. I cannot understand this. Landstuhl is the greatest U.S. military hospital in Europe, and since last year, day after day new wounded Soldiers are going to Landstuhl. To close Landstuhl for a demonstration is a very bad thing. I think none of the wounded Soldiers would understand this. I am ashamed of this. This has hurt me very much. The protesters had no respect for the wounded Soldiers who have given so much for the freedom in our world.

Wilhelmine Aufmkolk
Germany

Registered to vote yet? See your voting assistance officer or visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov for a federal postcard application to register.

Herald Union

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News and features

News flash

Best in the Army

The *Herald Union* newspaper was named the Army's best newspaper in the Tabloid-Format Newspaper category of this year's Keith L. Ware Journalism Competition. The 104th Area Support Group's **Anemone Rueger** earned an honorable mention in the Feature writing category. The American Forces Network-Europe's **Michelle Michael** earned Civilian Broadcast Journalist of the Year honors. **Spc. Ryan Smith**, a 372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment Soldier, who frequently reported on 1st Armored Division Soldiers while serving in Baghdad, took third place in the "Rising Star" for New Outstanding Writer category. Several Frankfurt-based AFN broadcasters also claimed top honors including **AFN Europe**, first place for a Radio Newscast; **Michael**, third place TV "Turn and Burn" Report; **Staff Sgt. Nick Tovo**, honorable mention Television Report; **AFN Europe**, third place Regional Newscast; **AFN Europe Command Information**, second place Command Information Plan; and **Patrick Henry**, second place Television Graphics Production.

Finance Ball

The 266th Finance Command will hold its Regimental Ball with the theme "Thanksgiving Tribute to Heroes Downrange and Heroes at Home" April 16 at the Heidelberg Village Pavilion in Patrick Henry Village. Make reservations by April 5. Cost is \$20 per person. Call Jannie Bringman at mil 379-5100, civ (06202) 80-5100 or email Jannie.Bringman@266fc.army.mil to make reservations. (IMA-E Public Affairs)

Report suspicious activity

Terrorists conduct what is called a planning phase before any attack. The terrorists who struck on Sept. 11, 2001, and recently in Spain were in the planning phases for several months before those attacks. Terrorists monitor their potential targets, take photos and make sketches of security procedures, ask questions about personnel and missions — and sometimes they don't seem out of place. An example is someone using a cell phone at a bus stop. It may not seem suspicious, but if they are taking photos with the cell phone and have not gotten on the last few buses, it should make you suspicious. If you see someone doing something suspicious or hear someone asking questions about U.S. personnel, facilities or activities contact the Hanau Military Intelligence Detachment at mil 322-8697. Their agent, who is on duty around the clock, can also be reached at civ (0171) 223 2731. Try to remember as much about the incident as you can, especially license plate numbers. Do NOT investigate the incident yourself — leave that to the experts. (Courtesy of the Hanau MI Detachment)

State of Hessen provides free tickets for redeploying Soldiers

By Karl Weisel

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Redeploying Operation Iraqi Freedom Soldiers have a lot to look forward to — reunions with family and friends, travel and a well-deserved break from an extremely challenging mission. They can also enjoy a host of free entertainment courtesy of local German cultural, sports and business organizations.

"The Hessen State Chancellery provided

the U.S. Forces with 800 complimentary tickets," said Anemone Rueger of the 104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office. "State government officials contacted primarily those cities where U.S. forces are stationed and the state museums.

"The outcome is that there are already more than 800 tickets available for all kinds of things ranging from free public transportation passes to swimming pools, recreation parks to sports games and cultural events," said Rueger.

Hessen-based redeploying Soldiers and their families can take advantage of the complimentary tickets which offer free admission to the newly renovated Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt, the Saalburg fortress, the Opel Zoo, Frankfurt Galaxy games, Hessenpark, Frankfurt English Theater performances, Giessen's Mathematics Museum, local swimming pools and more.

"This is just an extension of ongoing efforts to support local U.S. forces by the host nation," said Rueger.

Past efforts have included increased force protection by the Bundeswehr and German police and a holiday bash hosted by the minister president for families of deployed service members.

The complimentary tickets will be made available for returning OIF Soldiers and their families at local Base Support Battalion offices in the coming weeks, Rueger said.

Returning Soldiers in Baumholder will also discover several free opportunities, according to Bernd Mai of the 222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office. "A local restaurant has already provided about 50 free lunch tickets and the Public Affairs Office is working with local businesses to get additional tickets for activities within the vicinity," Mai said.

Visit the 104th ASG website at www.104thasg@hanau.army.mil, listen to the American Forces Network radio and check upcoming issues of the *Herald Union* for more information about the complimentary tickets and additional opportunities for redeploying OIF Soldiers.



Photo by Karl Weisel

Tickets to the Opel Zoo are among a variety of free opportunities made available by Hessen and Baumholder agencies for Soldiers returning from Iraq and their families.

USO packs gift bags for single Soldiers

Volunteers turn out in force to prepare 100s of goodie bags for returning U.S. Soldiers

By David Ruderman

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

A dozen women gathered in the basement of Building 4 on Hanau's Pioneer Kaserne March 18 to help the Hanau USO fill, count and transport gift bags for single Soldiers slated to return from Iraq over the next two months.

"They're for everybody, and they're for single Soldiers. We want to target them, bless their hearts," said 1-501st Aviation family member Debbie Curtis.

The gift bags contain items such as food and water, videos and toiletries, said Manuela Blackwell, a 1-1st Cavalry family member.

"I think this is a great thing. They don't want to go out shopping right away once they get back. This'll help them get started." The goods were supplied by stateside and local companies that wanted to contribute to the cause, she said.

"We've had help from the Shoppette,

AAFES always supports us really well, and Celtic Water, Volvo and S&K have all helped," said Lori Pond, the Hanau USO's manager. "We got a real good response."

By day's end the volunteers packed over 550 bags, said Pond. She expected more supplies to arrive and volunteers to pack another 350 the following Wednesday. They were to be distributed to single Soldier barracks in Hanau, Büdingen and Friedberg.

"We just heard about it through email," said Kristi Martin, a 501st Military Intelligence family member as she gathered bags for shipment. A handful of toddlers and young children played in the hallway as the women organized the goods.

"Some of these are for 1-1st Cav," said Blackwell. "We're either going to put them in their rooms or we'll hand them to them when we welcome them home."



Photo by Karl Weisel

Robin Hodgson, a Company B, 2-501st Aviation family member, packs bags at the Hanau USO.

News and features

Reintegration plan

Continued from page 1

briefing the entire reintegration process from the minute the Soldier arrives in Germany to returning to the unit and training over a year's time.

Several tools are available explaining the reintegration process. Many spouses and family members have already received the USAREUR Reintegration Guide, which is also available at the USAREUR website. The "Blue Book," as it is more commonly referred to, explains the reintegration process, USAREUR's mission and contains a helpful checklist for families and Soldiers returning to their homes and communities.

Although reuniting with loved ones is important, block leave and school procedures were on the minds of many attendees.

"We have built a reintegration plan throughout the school year and are ready and willing to help you," said Diane Ohman, director of Department of Defense Dependent Schools in Europe. Ohman explained that the schools will work with parents if they wish to have their child out of school during the block leave period.

"It is very important that you do not disenroll your child to take them out of school for block leave," Ohman said.

Parents have several options to choose from so that the entire family can participate in the block leave. Ohman suggested that parents contact the school with the approximate time of the block leave and make arrangements for the student to get assignments in advance in order to make up any missed work. She also reminded parents that DoDDS does have an early dismissal date of May 12 for personnel moving out of the area and that with a letter from the unit's commander or rear detachment commander, students can be released by this date to also participate in block leave.

"It is very important for young people to continue their education. If you know that you will be departing the area before school is released then now is the time to prepare for early dismissal," she said.

Block leave and its effects on child care were also concerns by spouses who work in child development centers or are family child care providers throughout the ASG footprint. One worker said she was told she could not go on block leave once her husband returns.

"Our goal is to ensure that all our child care workers be authorized to go on block leave with their spouses," said Russell Hall, IMA-E director. Knowing that child care issues would be a concern once many soldiers return and go on block leave with their families, IMA-E contracted with several uni-



Photo by Cassandra Kardeke

Mary Suthann gets information about the reintegration process from USAREUR's Brig. Gen. Russell Frutiger, deputy chief of staff, G1, after the reintegration briefing.

versities in the United States to have students fill in the void at CDCs throughout installations in Europe. Currently, those students are working at CDCs in Italy with the 22nd ASG, "and I have not heard a complaint yet," Hall said.

Col. George Latham, 104th ASG commander, said a memorandum was issued in November instructing units and organizations to allow spouses and family members time off from work so that the family could spend the block leave time together. "We'll get it sorted out so that individuals at the CDCs can take block leave with their spouses," he said. "No one will be kept from taking block leave."

Child care block leave

"Some FCC providers may have to bring their children back into the CDCs during that time to take block leave," added Hall.

Attendees at the 12 installations receiving the Town Hall VTC also were provided information about household goods and vehicle damage claims from Maj. Robert Vasquez, 1st Armored Division Staff Judge Advocate.

"Although you have 70 days to file a claim for damaged household goods or damage done to your [privately owned] vehicle, you must identify the loss or damage immediately so that we can be made aware of it," Vasquez said. Vasquez informed community members that when filing a claim on a POV, owners can either make the claim through their insurance company or their local Legal Claims Office.

Officials also reminded everyone taking part in the reintegration session that family members need to have "realistic expectations" about family reunions with their family member who was deployed. "Nobody comes back from war the same as they were before," said Chaplain (Col.) Kenneth Leinwand, USAREUR chaplain. "We want to make sure that Soldiers coming back from war are properly taken care of."

While unit chaplains will be going through the same reintegration process as their fellow redeploying Soldiers, Leinwand said BSB chaplains are trained and are standing by to provide assistance and guidance wherever they are needed.

Col. Jon Finke of the 1st Personnel Command, reminded everyone that picking up mail from local Community Mail Rooms is crucial during the transitional period. Because of the heavy influx of mail being sent back from Iraq to Germany, it's vital that people check their mail on a daily basis to free up space at the CMRs, he said.

At the close of the briefing Frutiger announced that the Charlie Daniels Band would perform a free concert at Wiesbaden Army Airfield on May 10. More details will be announced when they become available, he said.

For more information about the USAREUR reintegration process visit the 104th ASG home page at www.104thasg.hanau.army.mil and click on "USAREUR Roadmap to Reintegration." (Karl Weisel contributed to this story)

News flash

Poison prevention

Children act fast and adults must ensure household chemicals and medicines are stored out of children's reach at all times. If a household chemical or medicine has been ingested or if you suspect your child has ingested a potentially hazardous product, call the Landstuhl Medical Center at civ (06221) 57116 or mil 116. Be prepared to give facts to the expert at the Poison Control Center such as information on the label of the suspected product, the victim's age, weight, existing health conditions or problems, the substance involved, if the person vomited, your location and any first aid given. Stop by your local Army health clinic pharmacy for stickers with emergency phone numbers and other information. (Courtesy of Tracy A. Bailey, U.S. Army Hospital, Heidelberg Public Affairs Office)

Alcoholics Anonymous

The Hanau Army Substance Abuse Program hosts Alcoholics Anonymous meetings every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in Room 327, Building 3 on Hanau's Pioneer Kaserne (enter the building at the first stairwell closest to the main street and proceed to the third floor, end of the hall). For more information call Ken Petersen at mil 322-8911/8762.

New employment system

The Defense Department, Office of Personnel Management and labor unions concluded two days of discussions about concepts for a new labor relations system for the Defense Department under the National Security Personnel System. In April a formal proposal will be provided to the unions that will begin the congressionally mandated 90-day collaboration process. NSPS forges a new collective bargaining system between DoD and federal unions by creating a modern and dynamic model for labor negotiations, DoD officials said. The concepts call for bargaining at the national level but do not eliminate local bargaining units. The current collective bargaining model — fragmented among nearly 1,400 local units and focused on procedural detail — diverts national security resources and focus, officials said. Congress has given labor and management the opportunity to forge what the law calls a "collaborative issue-based approach to labor management relations." (DoDNews)

IMO conference

All signal officers, information management officers and interested personnel are invited to attend the 102nd Signal Battalion's Information Management Officer Conference March 31 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Wiesbaden Activities Center on Wiesbaden Army Airfield. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. Topics will include help desk procedures, training, Windows 2000 and server consolidation. Call Winfred Robinson at mil 337-5929 for more information.

Torch Party

Continued from page 1

in hugs and kisses. Barb was not far behind and she mirrored the loving greetings that took place all around her and her family as loved ones reunited.

"It's great to be home," said Schwaiger grinning, continuing to hug his little girls and

his wife.

All smiles, Shauna and Dillon Wiggins held each other close. Their wait had come to an end.

And little Joseph Courchen jumped on his father, hugging him tightly. Smiling as his father William hoisted him for a hug with

mother Jennifer, Joseph's face was lit brightly with excitement.

The arrival of the Torch Party signalled the beginning of 1st Armored Division's redeployment to home station. In the coming months the rest of America's Tank Division will return to Germany and Fort Riley, Kan.

Month focuses on child abuse prevention

Commentary by Damaris Feleke

Family Advocacy Program coordinator

The U.S. Army observes Child Abuse Prevention Month during the month of April. This year's theme is "Building Safe Communities Prevents Child Abuse."

Child abuse prevention is a community problem and finding solutions depends on everyone's involvement. Statistics of children who are abused and neglected fluctuate each year. The most recent figures released in 2001, indicated that approximately 903,000 children were found to be victims of child maltreatment. More than half of child victims suffered neglect. According to the Army Central Registry, in 2001 there were 6,579 child abuse cases reported.

In the Wiesbaden community

alone, over 80 cases of child abuse were reported during fiscal year 2003. Those cases included child neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.

In response to this problem, the Family Advocacy Program is committed to supporting families by promoting child abuse and neglect education. Family Advocacy is also committed to providing programs that help strengthen the institution of marriage and help parents rear their children in positive and healthy environments.

This April as we observe Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Wiesbaden community is launching a Blue Ribbon Campaign to prevent child abuse and neglect. During the past several years, the blue ribbon has been widely recognized as a national symbol of child abuse awareness.

Began in the spring of 1989, Bonnie Finney, a Norfolk, Va., grandmother, tied a blue ribbon to her van as a memorial to her 3-year-old grandson who was murdered by his mother's abusive boyfriend. The spirit of her blue ribbon grew, and others have joined her in using blue ribbons as reminders of the bruises of child abuse. Each year thousands of ribbons are distributed nationally to organizations and individuals interested in preventing child abuse and neglect.

As a way to raise awareness of the need for child abuse prevention in the military and the fact that everyone can be a hero to a child, the Family Advocacy Program and Exceptional Family Member Program are also sponsoring a children's poster and essay campaign. Win-

ners will be announced in the month of April.

Let's focus on working together during 2004 to make the future better for our children. Remember, there is something that each one of us can do to help. Show children you care about them. Wear a blue ribbon to show your support of children and child abuse prevention.

Volunteer to watch your friend or neighbor's child while they take some time to relax or get some work done. Provide religious, civic, professional and social groups that you are a part of with information about child abuse and neglect. Find people who can support you as a parent and talk to them when you are feeling stressed. Advocate for improved policies and services for families.

To learn more about preventing

child abuse, contact the Wiesbaden Family Advocacy Program manager at Army Community Service, Building 7790, in Hainerberg Housing or Social Work Services. Both programs offer ongoing child abuse prevention education, stress management classes and discipline education.

Beginning in April a four-week Anger Management class focusing on anger control, communication, physical responses to anger, emotion, feelings and behavior will be offered free by Social Work Services.

The New Parent Education and Support Program also offers parenting classes regularly. Classes include Taming Your Toddler's Tantrums, Basic Newborn Safety, Budgeting for Baby and a Baby Basics parenting class. For more information on classes call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.



Signs of abuse

How can you tell if a child is being abused? Children who are physically abused may:

- * Be nervous around adults
- * Be watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- * Have difficulty playing
- * Act aggressive to adults and other children
- * Be unable to concentrate at school
- * Suddenly underachieve or overachieve at school
- * Find it difficult to trust other people and make friends
- * Arrive at school too early, or leave after the other children.



Photo illustration by Karl Weisel

Children who are sexually abused may:

- * Behave differently when the abuse starts
- * Care less about their appearance, or their health
- * Talk or act sexually at too early an age
- * Be secretive and stop talking about home-life
- * Start soiling themselves
- * Be unable to sleep
- * Suddenly find physical contact frightening
- * Run away from home.

Children who are neglected or emotionally abused may:

- * Have difficulty learning to talk
- * Find it hard to develop close relationships
- * Be over-friendly with strangers
- * Be unable to play imaginatively
- * Think badly of themselves
- * Underachieve at school.

Remember, none of these signs prove that child abuse is present, since any of them may be noticeable at one time or another. But when they occur repeatedly or in combination with one another, the child may be suffering abuse. To report suspected child abuse call the Wiesbaden Military Police desk at mil 337-5096 or civ (0611) 705-5096.